



# SIDE BY SIDE: A MENTORING NEWSLETTER

*The rung of a ladder was never meant to rest upon, but only to hold a man's foot long enough to enable him to put the other somewhat higher.*

*- Thomas Henry Huxley, Life and Letters of Thomas Huxley*

*Side by Side: A Mentoring Newsletter is written by Victoria Duff, Mentor Training Coordinator for the Department of Education. She can be reached via e-mail at: [victoria.duff@doe.state.nj.us](mailto:victoria.duff@doe.state.nj.us) or by calling 1-609-292-0189. If you have a Novice Teacher Tip or a Mentor Teacher Tip that you would like to share, please e-mail Vicki Duff.*

Welcome to the first edition of the *Side by Side: A Mentoring Newsletter* - a newsletter for novice teachers, mentors, Local Professional Development Committees, curriculum coordinators, and all those who are involved in mentoring practices in the State of New Jersey. The mentoring newsletter will have bimonthly editions available on this website.

*Side by Side* will alert to you to the latest information regarding implementation of the mentoring regulations, mentoring resources, training sessions and workshops, and provide advice on a variety of mentoring issues. You will also be invited to share your expertise and reflections as we work through the process together. In this edition we will review the key elements in the revised mentoring regulations.

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## The Mentoring Connection

Teaching is part science, part art. Teaching is part knowledge, part instinct. Effective teaching is the result of a process of learning from experience, research, and our colleagues in schools. For the successful teacher, it is a daily journey of preparation, learning, and instructing. It means teachers are always on a mission to find the support and guidance to enhance their classroom practice and to meet his/her challenges of enabling each student to meet their greatest potential. Teachers' professional lives are enriched and eased by those colleagues who share their promising practices; who take the time to enter the discussions on what works; and who encourage others to develop their professional best. All teachers must be mentored in a myriad of situations from the first day they

walk into their schools. The quality of that mentoring

depends on the skills adults use to work and collaborate with other adults. Quality mentoring helps to recruit and retain new teachers and fosters the continued learning and growth of veterans and novice teachers.

### **ALERT!!!**

#### **MENTORING REGULATIONS IN NEW JERSEY SUBCHAPTER 8: 6A:9-8.4**

On December 17, 2003 the State Board of Education adopted the new Professional Licensure and Standards regulations. Included in the new Licensing subchapters of New Jersey's Administrative Code are revised regulations for mentoring, professional teacher and administrator standards, and professional development requirements for educators. The focus of the new licensing regulations is on standards-based reforms across the continuum of practice to support teaching and learning and enhance the achievement of all students. The new licensing regulations call for a rigorous one-year mentoring program for novice teachers. Highlights of the mentoring regulations follow:

## **MENTORING REGULATIONS IN NEW JERSEY CONTINUED**

- Mentoring plans and programs must align with the Professional Standards for Teachers (<http://www.state.nj.us/njded/profdev/standards>);
- By September of 2004 mentoring plans are to be developed by the local Professional Development Committee and reviewed and approved by the local board of education and the county superintendent;
- Payment of mentoring fees is the responsibility of the novice teacher, unless state funds are available. The employing district, at its discretion, may pay the cost of mentoring fees;
- When state mentoring funds are available, they must supplement, not supplant, district programs. Funds may be used for stipends, release time for observation, substitute teachers, and training activities;
- All novice teachers holding instructional certificates, including special education teachers, must be assigned a mentor when they begin their employment;
- Mentors must undergo an application process and meet established criteria identified in the mentor plan;
- Mentors must take part in a comprehensive mentor training program based on the professional teacher standards;
- Mentors should have at least three years' experience or be a retired teacher or administrator, and preferably teach within the same certification area;
- Retired educators must receive additional training in current educational practices;
- The local board of education will submit an annual report to the Department of Education on the effectiveness of the mentor program.

Look for information on the implementation of the mentoring regulations on the department's Web sites (NJ PEP and Office of Academic and Professional Standards) for upcoming sessions in spring 2004.

## **NOVICE AND MENTOR TEACHER DISCUSSION TIP OF THE MONTH**

This is the time of year when we need to begin thinking about and planning for state assessments. The following questions could serve as a discussion tool for mentoring pairs or for small groups:

- ✓ How have I used curriculum-based assessments this year to help guide and refine instruction?
- ✓ In a review of the Core Curriculum Curriculum Content Standards (CCCS) for my grade level, what activities and instruction must still take place to support student learning prior to the state assessments?
- ✓ Which assessment strategies do my students find the most challenging and how will I address that need?
- ✓ How have I provided for students who need additional reinforcement in skill areas?

Dr. Brian Robinson, director of the Office of Evaluation and Assessment at the DOE, suggests that teachers preparing students for state assessments need to remember that student improvement comes from the ongoing formative evaluations within the classroom, not just the summative evaluations of the state testing system. He also noted that teachers should periodically review the CCCS and test specifications in order to design classroom assessments in such a way that students are familiar with the standardized testing process.

